

S/N: 10/717,078
Reply to Office Action of June 30, 2005

Atty Dkt No. LEAR 03781 PUS

Remarks

In response to the non-final Office Action mailed June 30, 2005, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections and that the case pass to issue in light of the amendments above and the remarks below. By this paper, claims 1 and 17, which are the only pending independent claims, are amended to include limitations directed towards a control module. New dependent claim 21 is added to define additional subject matter associated with control provided by the control module.

The Examiner has set forth the following rejections: claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by USPN 6,247,825 to Borkowski (hereinafter the Borkowski patent); claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 5,987,793 to Ebine (hereinafter the Ebine patent) in view of USPA 2002/0080043 to Damiani (hereinafter the Damiani application); and claims 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Ebine patent in view of the Damiani application and further in view of USPN 6,121,959 to Fukumoto (hereinafter the Fukumoto patent).

For the reasons expressed in more detail below, the Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments above distinguish over each of the references cited by the Examiner. Consequently, the Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the rejections and pass the case to issue.

Rejection of Claims 1-17 Under 102(b) Over The Borkowski Patent

This rejection applies to independent claims 1 and 17. The Applicants respectfully submit that the Borkowski patent fails to disclose the limitations recited in the amendments to claims 1 and 17. In particular, the Borkowski patent fails to disclose a control module that not only selectively interfaces a control panel with at least one of a plurality of vehicle systems to be controlled but that also controls an illumination source to selectively

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illuminate at least one of the plurality of switches/icons based on the at least one of the plurality of vehicle systems to be controlled.

The Borkowski application merely discloses a lighting system where LED's are used to illuminate an instrument panel having a number of switches. The LED's are not selectively illuminatable by a control module, as recited in independent claims 1 and 17. Consequently, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 17, and dependent claims 2-16, which depend therefrom and include all of the limitations thereof, are patentable and nonobvious over the Borkowski patent.

Rejection of Claims 1-17 Under 103(a) Over
The Ebine Patent and The Damiani Application

This rejection applies to independent claims 1 and 1. The Applicants respectfully submit that the Ebine patent and Damiani application fail to disclose the limitations recited in the amendments to claims 1 and 17. In particular, the Ebine patent and Damiani application fail to disclose a control module that not only selectively interfaces a control panel with at least one of a plurality of vehicle systems to be controlled but that also controls an illumination source to selectively illuminate at least one of the plurality of switches/icons based on the at least one of the plurality of vehicle systems to be controlled.

The Examiner admits that the Ebine patent fails to disclose its application in an automotive environment where vehicle systems are controlled. The Applicants further submit that the Damiani application fails to make-up for the deficiencies of the Ebine patent and that there is no motivation to combine these references. In particular, the Damiani application merely relates to a system where fixed buttons are used to actuate a number of features associated with the graphical user interface. The fixed buttons cannot be selectively illuminated. Consequently, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 17, and dependent claims 2-16, which depend therefrom include all of the limitations thereof are patentable and nonobvious over the Ebine patent and Damiani application.

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Rejection of Claims 18-20 Under 103(a) Over The Ebine and Fukumoto Patents and The Damiani Application

This rejection now applies to dependent claims 18 and 20, which depend from patentable independent claim 17. The Applicants respectfully submit that these dependent claims are patentable at least for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend are patentable.

New Claims

New dependent claim 21 has been added to more particularly claim that the control module may be used to selectively illuminate at least two icons and that different vehicle systems are controlled as a function thereof. The Applicants respectfully submit that this dependent claim is separately patentable from the other pending claims as none of the cited references teach the recited limitations.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that each rejection has been fully replied to and traversed and that the case is in condition to pass to issue. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this case to issue and is invited to contact the undersigned if it would further prosecution of this case to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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